

**CPAM 2005-0003, Comprehensive Plan Amendment  
for Upper Broad Run and Upper Foley Subareas**

**Proposed Revised General Plan Policy Amendments**

**September 6, 2005**

*Blue, strike-through text to be deleted; red, underlined text to be added.*

**Chapter 11- Implementation**

**B. Open Space**

*(Amend Policy 3a, pg. 11-3).*

- a. Residential Neighborhoods and mixed use communities: Densities ranging from 1.0 dwelling units per acre up to 4.0 dwelling units per acre for the Suburban Policy Area and up to 4.0 dwelling units per acre in the Upper Broad Run and Upper Foley Transition subareas may be considered by the County in accordance with the capital facilities guidelines of this Plan and may be considered by the County for voluntary participation in the Open Space Preservation Program. Residential densities above 3.5 and up to and including 4.0 dwellings per acre may be considered by the County in return for voluntary participation in the open space preservation program according to the guidelines presented below and the Density Transfer Guidelines.

**D. Transition Policy Area Design Guidelines**

*(Add Policy #4, pg. 11-20).*

**4. Mixed use communities in Upper Broad Run and Upper Foley Subareas**

**a. Function:**

Mixed use communities in the Upper Broad Run and Upper Foley subareas are intended to provide a mix of residential dwelling types and civic uses; they should have a peaceful character suitable for private domestic life, recreational activities, and neighborhood social gatherings. Community structures and facilities, including the variety of housing types as well as civic, educational, recreational, and commercial use, should maintain an intimate, domestic scale and be designed to maximize privacy within residences and rear yards and foster small group interaction within the hierarchy of small communal squares and greens distributed throughout the neighborhood.

**b. Scale:**



Mixed use communities are intended to provide densities of up to 4.0 dwelling units per acre in the Upper Broad Run subarea and up to 3.0 dwelling units per acre in the Upper Foley subarea. The proximity of adjoining buildings and the narrow streetscapes will provide a very pedestrian-oriented intensity. Mixed use communities will be compact, with a variety of unit types and lot sizes that provide for workforce housing while stepping down in development densities as they approach the Rural Policy Area and Bull Run.

c. Land Use Arrangement:

Different land uses should be mixed in the same community. A variety of domestic and supporting land uses such as day care, personal services, or local recreation sites will be fundamental to all mixed use communities; additional civic, commercial, and employment uses also may occur as part of a mixed use community commercial component. These different uses should be combined in logical and harmonious ways but should not be relegated to single-use pods, as is typical of a conventional suburban development.

For reasons of community harmony and visual compatibility, like uses should front one another across secondary collector and local access streets, while compatible but different types of uses may be placed on adjoining lots along these streets. Compatibility will be measured in terms of size, architectural similarities, landscaping, site development, and other similar matters. Should other considerations cause the fronting of unlike uses, every effort should be made to maintain a similarity of building mass, scale, window and door openings, and detail. In short, different and even disparate uses may and should be harmoniously located within the residential neighborhoods and within the individual block as well.

Open space and how it functions in the mixed use community also is important. The “outdoor rooms” of a community play a critical role in establishing community identity and facilitating social activities. The *Revised General Plan* calls for a significant open space component consisting of elements of the Green Infrastructure such as stream corridors, floodplains, woods, wet ponds, community gardens, greenbelts, buffers, trails, structured parks, athletic fields and playgrounds. A hierarchical assortment of squares and greens should be located throughout the mixed use community, while neighborhood, community, district, and county parks should be located between them. Open space within mixed use communities should complement and provide a visual and physical transition to the adjacent Rural Policy Area and Bull Run.

Active open space generally should be located within 1500 feet of all residences within residential neighborhoods. In mixed use communities recreational areas should be open to the surrounding streets and contribute to a sense of spaciousness. While protection and integration of the natural features of a site through conservation design techniques will be paramount, usable open space such as squares and greens generally should be flat and well drained and have a



minimum size of 10,000 square feet fronting on a local street.

Community, district, and County parks generally will be located between mixed use communities and be reached on foot, by means of sidewalks on local access streets and/or trail connections or by automobile on primary or secondary collector roads. While topography, vegetation, hydrology, proposed use, and design intentions should determine the location of playing fields and placement of community centers, bleachers, and other structures in these parks, significant park buildings generally should be located along and be very visible from the secondary collector roads linking mixed use communities and be near the areas served.

Civic and community uses should be recognized as the major landmarks of a mixed use community. Every attempt should be made to provide civic and community uses with highly visible locations, such as the termination of a vista or a prominent location around a square. Furthermore, civic or public structures should be located along a collector road or street.

Such uses should be featured and not lost within a sea of parking on an inconsequential side street of a community. Parking for civic and public uses should be either provided as parallel parking along the street or behind the use, in the middle of the block. Because users of these buildings frequently arrive after the conclusion of the working day or on the weekend, shared parking agreements with nearby office or commercial developments may be appropriate, reducing the required lot size, and rendering the projects more affordable.

Blocks should be the main organizing feature of individual neighborhoods. While conservation design, hydrology, proposed use and design intentions should determine block size and configuration, mixed use communities should have small block widths and lengths - an exception to this rule may apply to those blocks on the edge of a community where a lower density transition to the Rural Policy Area or Bull Run is sought. Although considerable design freedom is granted in the design of blocks, pedestrian movement is best encouraged by blocks not exceeding 400 feet in length. Furthermore, residential blocks of greater than 200 to 300 feet in width tend to develop accessory, sometimes unanticipated, land uses along the service alleys.

Pedestrian movement is stimulated by a brisk succession of structures and intricate building detail. Movement declines with boring front yards, nondescript side yards and dull garage doors. Side yards provide little usable family outdoor recreation space while generating the need for additional, costly road and utility construction and rectangular rear yards generally provide the most effective space for family activities. Mixed use communities should reduce front and side yards to the minimum needed for health and safety reasons and strive to provide effective and usable rear yards. To this end, lot designers should consider the use of a "build-to" line, which would establish the maximum setback of structures from the street and also consider establishing a clear definition such as a low wall or hedge, between the private front yard and the sidewalk space. This



arrangement could also lead to a more affordable housing product.

d. Streetscape:

Mixed use community rights-of-way should be designed in a hierarchical, generally rectilinear pattern of collector roads and local access streets and alleys that respects the Green Infrastructure elements of the community. Streets should terminate in other roads and streets. Collector and local access streets are to be considered the main “public rooms” of a community and should be designed to accommodate a number of specific, interactive functions, such as: (i) pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular movement, and the parking of cars; (ii) foreground and entryway into private residences, communal and public buildings; and (iii) interactive social space.

To achieve these functions streets should be designed as a network of defined yet lively spaces surrounding blocks. Each street should be further designed as a set of carefully graduated zones as follows:

- i. A zone of privacy near the entry and ground floor windows of residential buildings or an “eddy” area adjacent to commercial buildings;
- ii. A pedestrian movement and meeting zone;
- iii. A buffer zone of street trees, plantings and parked cars; and
- iv. A zone of moving vehicles.

In order to define the street space, buildings facing each other across the street should be placed close to the street with minimal setbacks to frame the street. Spatial definition should be reinforced with the regular planting of street trees chosen to develop an overhead leaf canopy. Further street definition should be sought by emphasizing block corners with street lights, while the vista at the end of the street should terminate with a centrally placed building façade, such as a major house or civic building, an archway into a neighborhood green, a house of worship spire or a monument.

Major collector roads, used primarily to connect communities with each other and with the arterial network, should avoid dividing any mixed use community, although major collector roads may skirt such neighborhoods. Secondary collector roads, which act as the primary link between the community neighborhoods, should be distinguished from the local access streets that they serve by means of larger scaled and more dignified structures, such as houses of worship, major residences, grander tree species and richer choices of street furniture. Local access streets should possess a liveliness generated by variety of building types and details such as entryway porches, interesting doors, lighting fixtures and by careful selection of street furniture and trees.

Alleys provide for property service functions such as rear yard and accessory apartment access, parking and garaging, utilities and trash collection. While the service function of alleys will strongly influence design character, a certain



irregular charm and casual mix of ad-hoc service and recreational functions should be sought in the design of these, important playground and “chore-ground” areas.

Continuous parallel parking for additional cars and visitors should be provided in the street at the front of residential lots. Garages should be set back from the front façade of the dwellings.

Parking for non-residential, civic, commercial, employment and recreational uses located in the mixed use communities should be provided in the middle of blocks and reached by means of alleys, and/or provided by continuous on-street parallel parking, or provided on the perimeter of the neighborhood and reached by secondary collector roads. In no case should parking lots occupy significant frontage along residential streets.

Streets and their widths are perhaps the most distinguishing feature of suburban type developments. Typically designed to move only auto-mobiles, streets seldom play a constructive role in community character. However, street designs that are sensitive to views, pedestrian movement, landscape, and physical enclosure may create, in new communities, an outdoor public space that encourages community interaction and social activity.

Cul-de-sacs, along with significant building spacing and homogeneity of uses, represent a basic visual characteristic of suburban neighborhoods. In some circumstances, the use of cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets will be essential in order to implement conservation design. Cul-de-sacs can separate one neighborhood from another and may prevent convenient pedestrian or vehicular movement. Interconnected streets, whether in a grid or curvilinear pattern within the neighborhood provide better traffic movement and emergency service response as well as greater opportunities for social interaction. Cul-de-sacs should be limited to the minimum required to address environmental and engineering constraints.

Sidewalks and pedestrian ways supplement and complement street systems in establishing the character of a residential environment. The pedestrian circulation system need not parallel the street system. However, a sidewalk should be provided on at least one side of a public street. Trails and paths behind homes or through public open space present a safety concern for both the pedestrian and the adjoining property owner. Any use of trails not associated with a larger publicly managed park system should incorporate design features that enhance safety and security for users and property owners. Pedestrian circulation systems should be provided as convenient, safe, and attractive links between residential groupings, open space areas, recreational areas, schools, and local shopping centers.

### 3. Non Residential Developments Along Major Arterial and Collector Roads

*(Amend Policy 3c, pg. 11-19)*

#### c. Land Use Arrangement

Non-residential uses will front major arterial or collector roads, and may be developed as part of ~~a Village functioning as~~ the community core of a village or mixed use community. Conservation design will be applied. The scale and the volume of the primary built mass and accessory elements should not dominate over the natural landscape. Buildings should be shielded from the road using natural landscaping, earth berms, etc. Continuous plane building surfaces will be avoided. Homogeneous surfaces shall not exceed a linear distance of 20 feet especially when they front public access roads, such as major arterial or collector roads. Such surfaces will be broken up into smaller segments through fenestration and setbacks.

Parking areas will be located behind buildings and will not be the dominant feature of the landscape. Paved parking surfaces will be broken into modules; interspersed by tree plantings and other on-site landscape to prevent the creation of large paved surfaces as associated with suburban malls or office complexes. Developments will be sensitive to the use of glass and night lighting. These building elements will have to be buffered from access roads. Signage will be scaled and designed to be compatible with the surrounding landscape.